

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: TBIO, CG

SUBJECT: PRIVATE RESEARCH: DWARF CHIMPANZEES

1. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND YERKES REGIONAL PRIMATE RESEARCH CENTER, ATLANTA, ACTIVELY DEVELOPING PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH ZAIRE INSTITUT DE RECHERCHES SCIENTIFIQUES EN AFRIQUE CENTRALE (IRSAC) TO ESTABLISH A BREEDING COLONY OF DWARF CHIMPANZEES (PAN PANISCUS) AT IRSAC/MABALI STATION NEAR MBANDAKA. PROJECT RESULTING FROM JUNE 1971 NAS-ONRD WORKSHOP IN KINSHASA AND NAS SPECIAL PROJECT MISSION WHICH VISITED ZAIRE APRIL 1972. AIM OF THE PROJECT ULTIMATELY IS TO CREATE INTERNATIONAL PRIMATE RESEARCH CENTER IN ZAIRE USING PAN PANISCUS BRED IN CAPTIVITY FOR BROAD RANGE OF BIOMEDICAL STUDIES AND AS RESEARCH TRAINING CENTER FOR AFRICAN SCIENTISTS. PAN PANISCUS CHARACTERISTICS PRESUMED TO MAKE IT CLOSEST ANALOG OF HUMANS; ANIMAL THEREFORE POTENTIALLY OF UTMOST SCIENTIFIC INTEREST FOR SUCH RESEARCH FIELDS AS FERTILITY CONTROL, TOXICOLOGY, ETC.

2. PROJECT DESIGNED TO UNFOLD IN PHASES IN VIEW MANY IMPONDERABLES, STARTING WITH NEED FOR SCIENTIFIC CERTITUDE
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THAT ANIMAL, NOW STILL LARGELY UNSTUDIED, IS INDEED

CLOSEST ANALOG. AGREEMENT WITH ZAIRE OFFICIALS, PRINCIPALLY DR. NTIKA-NKUMU, IRSAC DIRECTOR-GENERAL, THAT FIRST STEP SHOULD BE THOROUGH SCIENTIFIC VERIFICATION OF ANIMALS' SUITABILITY FOR BIOMEDICAL PURPOSES TO BE DONE AT YERKES IN ATLANTA, WITH DECISIONS ON SUCCEEDING STEPS CONTINGENT ON POSITIVE FINDINGS.

3. NAS HAS JUST LEARNED THAT FIVE ANIMALS IN POSSESSION OF DR. DEWIJS, MD, SOCIETE DE CULTURES AU ZAIRE AT BOSONDJO (LISALA), WHO IS LEAVING ZAIRE PERMANENTLY SEPTEMBER 23, AVAILABLE TO YERKES. ANIMALS (2 AGED 7, 3 AGED 2 YEARS) RAISED BY DEWIJS FROM EARLY AGE. DEWIJS ANXIOUS TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE TO REPUTABLE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION WHERE CLOSE, INTIMATE CARE NECESSARY FOR ANIMALS' SURVIVAL CAN BE ASSURED. YERKES PREPARED ASSUME COST OF TRANSPORT, ETC. OF ANIMALS TO UNITED STATES.

4. DIFFICULTY HAS ARISEN IN OBTAINING ZAIRE APPROVAL FOR EXPORT THESE ANIMALS. NAS, UNABLE CONTACT NTIKA AT BUKAVU, LWIRO, HAS TELEXED ONRD DIRECTOR-GENERAL DR. NGUETE KIKHELA WHO MADE DEMARCHES WITH DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, EAUX ET FORETS UNIT. RESPONSE IS THAT ANIMALS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE BUT THAT SCIENTIFIC WORK ON THEM WILL HAVE TO BE DONE IN ZAIRE. THIS TOTALLY UNFEASIBLE IN VIEW OF LARGE GAMUT OF SPECIALTIES AND HEAVY INSTRUMENTATION REQUIRED LITTLE OF WHICH AVAILABLE IN ZAIRE. SINCE SENDING OF AT LEAST 2 ANIMALS TO YERKES CONSIDERED NECESSARY INTEGRAL STEP OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, REFUSAL ZAIRE AUTHORITIES TO ISSUE EXPORT PERMIT IN EFFECT ABORTING ENTIRE EFFORT. NAS FEELS THIS NOT APPRECIATED BY LICENSING AUTHORITIES.

5. NAS AND YERKES SENSITIVE TO AND APPLAUDING ZAIRE CONCERN FOR PROTECTION ENDANGERED SPECIES, AND FIRM ADHERENCE TO NEW INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION. POINTS OUT HOWEVER CONVENTION NOT DESIGNED TO STOP LIMITED MOVEMENT OF ANIMALS FOR RECOGNIZED SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES. NAS PROPOSED LEND-LEASE FORMULA TO ZAIRE WHEREBY ZAIRE WOULD RETAIN TITLE TO ANIMALS AND MAKE THEM UNCLASSIFIED

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AVAILABLE TO YERKES FOR DURATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH NEEDS.

6. THE 2 OLDEST OF THE 5 ANIMALS WOULD SATISFY THESE NEEDS BUT NAS/YERKES GREATLY CONCERNED TO ASSURE SURVIVAL OF THE 3 YOUNGEST WHICH NEED MAXIMUM CARE AND ATTENTION, AND GREATLY CONCERNED SUCH NOT LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE IN ZAIRE AT PRESENT TIME.

7. IN VIEW SHORTNESS OF TIME AND DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING THESE CONSIDERATIONS TO ZAIRE OFFICIALS DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH ISSUANCE EXPORT LICENSES FOR ANIMALS, NAS WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE EMBASSY SUPPORTING THIS INITIATIVE AT HIGHEST LEVELS. NAS BELIEVES THAT NEPTUNE INTERVENTION WITH COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE AND DR. CLOSE INTERVENTION AT PRESIDENCY COULD PRODUCE DESIRED RESULTS. NAS ALSO IN PROCESS OF OBTAINING IMPORT AUTHORIZATION FROM DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, OFFICE OF ENDANGERED SPECIES.

8. FOR INFORMATION OF EMBASSY, DRAFT TEXT OF PROPOSED COLLABORATION AGREEMENT WITH IRSAC IN HANDS OF PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR IN VIEW CONCURRENT EFFORTS TO OBTAIN PC TECHNICIANS FOR MABALI STATION ONCE BREEDING PROJECT GETS UNDERWAY. SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT WITH IRSAC ANTICIPATED NEAR FUTURE; IRSAC DIRECTOR-GENERAL HAS INDICATED HIS ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL.

9. PLEASE ADVISE SOONEST RESULTS OF EMBASSY EFFORT. RESULTS SHOULD ALSO BE COMMUNICATED TO DR. DEWIJS C/O MADAME MAHEU, SERVICE D'ACCEUIL, LEVER PLANTATIONS, KINSHASA. RUSH

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